OUR OWN APIARY.

COMBS TOO FAR APART IN SPRING.

DURING the last week in May we had occasion to visit a large number of beekeepers, and our opportunities for observation were unlimited. We found a great many apiarists who have the fault of leaving the combs too far apart. In hundreds of colonies which we examined, those having the combs well crowded together were very much stronger than were those which had not. It seems as if those that left the combs spread from 1¾ to 2 inches apart wintered in splendid condition, and although they clustered and bred well between such combs they had not bees enough to cover their circle of brood and keep it warm. One-and-a-quarter to one-and-three-eighth inches is ample spacing for such combs in the early spring, and to secure this close spacing we would shave down the tops of the combs to the necessary thickness, should they be drawn out and filled with honey. There is no objection to placing the combs close together at the top, if there is room for the bees to care for the brood below. We have on more than one occasion placed the combs close together at the top, and we found that the bees would shorten up the cells as they removed the honey, and required the space for brooding purposes ; it thus left them a warmer and nicer brood nest. What we wish to emphasize just now is that with combs put just far enough apart so that the bees can do no more than get room to care for the brood, one quart of bees will do as much brooding as double their number when the combs are spread far apart. Especially is this the case in a cold wet spring such as we have just had.

PROTECTION NECESSARY IN SPRING.

In all our examinations we noticed that those packed in chaff, sawdust, or other material that would keep them warm after being set out from their winter quarters, were very much stronger and better than those in single-walled hives without any protection ; this spring has demonstrated clearly that hives properly packed and protected from the sudden changes and cold fully repaid the entire expense of the outside case or other packing. When one season will repay the expense of such cases, is it not reasonable to suppose that it is one of the best investments that can be made about the apiary. We are studying just now on some such outside case that will be portable in its nature, and easily handled—one which can be put away, when not in use, without occupying much room. Light material will answer for it nicely, because it is not the thickness of the outside case so much as the packing that is beneficial. We should like suggestions from those who have or are using outside cases which are to their liking.

AUTOMATIC SWARMING.

On page 133 of Gleanings on bee culture I notice a very interesting article to me from G. M. Doolittle, on "Automatic swarming" as it is termed. Over 40 years ago, my father then being a large beekeeper, but only in box-hives and log gums, concluded that he would try a similar plan to that suggested, and he prepared a number of hives both box hives and log gums, some double and some treble. Taking some of his strongest colonies he placed these hives around them, boring large holes in each and giving the bees free access from one to the other ; in this way he succeeded in having the bees store large quantities of honey in the side hives, but although he got combs with brood and larva and plenty of freshly laid eggs placed up in the hive, he did not succeed in getting them to form another swarm, although he did his best without the benefit of moveable frames. Some of the hives were quite full of bees and he supposed there were swarms in them, but late in the fall, on cutting off the connection between the hives, he found them to be queenless. During my earlier experience with movable frames I tried a great many plans without successful results, but after my return from Palestine and Cyprus, bringing with me as I did from England, the first queen excluding metal to this country, I then thought I could accomplish what I had frequently thought of, so I ordered the